



**Homeland
Security**

Press Release

February 24,
2004

Contact: 202-282-8010

**FACT SHEET: HOMELAND SECURITY INFORMATION NETWORK
TO EXPAND
COLLABORATION, CONNECTIVITY FOR STATES AND MAJOR
CITIES**

The Department of Homeland Security, as part of its Homeland Security Information Network initiative, is expanding its computer-based counterterrorism communications network to all 50 states, five territories, Washington, D.C., and 50 other major urban areas to strengthen its two-way flow of threat information.

This communications system will deliver real-time interactive connectivity among state and local partners and with the DHS Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC) through the Joint Regional Information Exchange System (JRIES). Other DHS agencies participate through seats at the HSOC and their own operations centers, and the system will be further expanded within DHS operations. Each state and major urban area's Homeland Security Advisor and other points of contact will receive software licenses, technology, and training to participate in the information sharing and situational awareness that JRIES already brings to state and local homeland security personnel across the United States. Examples of other points of participation include state National Guard

offices, Emergency Operations Centers, and first responder and Public Safety departments.

This increased connectivity will result in more effective communications and more efficient responses to deter, detect, prevent, or respond to terrorist actions. Information sharing to reduce vulnerabilities is an essential element of the Department's mission, and this real-time flow of encrypted information between homeland security partners will allow federal, state and local agencies to better perform their jobs of protecting America's hometowns.

The Homeland Security Information Network

The Homeland Security Information Network will significantly strengthen the flow of real-time threat information to state, local, and private sector partners at the Sensitive-but-Unclassified level, and provides a platform for communications through the classified SECRET level to state offices. The program is built upon the JRIES platform, a secure network and a suite of applications currently operating at the sensitive but unclassified (SBU) level. Participants currently include approximately 100 organizations, including federal agencies, States, municipalities and other local government entities, with a significant law enforcement user base. All participating entities have a certified counterterrorism mission. Approximately 1,000 users currently have access to the system.

This Homeland Security program begins the expansion of JRIES to a broader community of users over the next two months encompassing the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the five U.S. territories and 50 major urban areas - moving JRIES from its law enforcement heritage to a Homeland Security-focused civilian function for real-time information sharing.

As a foundation of the Homeland Security Information Network initiative, the broadened JRIES community of users will include the State Homeland Security Advisors, State Adjutant Generals (National Guard), State Emergency Operations Centers, local emergency services providers including firefighters, law enforcement, and others. Future program expansion will include the county level, communication at the classified SECRET level, and the involvement of the private sector. The expanded JRIES network will continue to support the law enforcement and intelligence counterterrorism mission, but will also provide communications, collaboration, and information sharing between DHS and other Federal agencies and local partners. The JRIES system, developed by State and local officials in partnership with the federal government, allows multiple jurisdictions, disciplines and emergency operation centers to receive and share the same intelligence information and tactical information - so that all users can have the same overall situational awareness.

As a Homeland Security program focused on monitoring, preventing, and responding to potential terrorist threats, this expanded JRIES network will also

share information with other communications tools used by law enforcement and other communities. The RISS.Net and LEO programs, for example, sponsored by the Department of Justice, address a much wider spectrum of criminal activity. Within the counter terrorism mission, JRIES, RISS.Net and LEO are complementary programs, and Homeland Security will continue to work closely with law enforcement. RISS.Net is law enforcement's premiere criminal database, and this JRIES expansion will include an interface between JRIES and RISS.Net that focuses on terrorism. The Homeland Security Information Network will also post its daily reports and warnings directly to RISS.Net via a JRIES interface. Combining JRIES' real-time collaboration capability and state-of-the-art portal technology with RISS.Net's legacy databases will enhance the capabilities of Homeland Security law enforcement partners.

Priority capabilities of this expanded information exchange system will include:

- Communications
 - Low-cost, always-on connectivity
 - End-to-end encrypted communications
- Collaboration / Analysis
 - Secure e-mail
 - Interactive collaboration tool (real time text or voice)
 - Supports requests for information, exchange, and cross-reference
 - Search and Link/Timeline analysis, map/imagery displays
- Information
 - Daily, periodic, and ongoing report sharing
 - Suspicious incident/pre-incident indicator data
 - Media studies and analysis
 - Mapping and imaging (national, state, county, city)
 - Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) repository
 - Strategic analysis of terrorist threats, tactics and weapons

The Homeland Security Mission

The prevention of terrorist attacks will be the dominant mission of this expanded JRIES network. The expanded JRIES will also be used as a collaboration, planning, and communications tool for facilitating the general homeland security mission across all jurisdictions nation-wide and will serve as a means for supporting crisis management and recovery operations post-terrorist attack or during the course and aftermath of a natural crisis.

One of the principal JRIES counterterrorism functions will be to exchange information and facilitate the analysis of activity believed related to terrorist activity. Analytical priorities include detecting threats to U.S. critical infrastructure as part of the attack prevention mission, and this communications

network will support critical infrastructure information. Analysis facilitated by the Homeland Security Information Network will include mapping suspicious activity believed related to terrorism against critical infrastructure locations to determine trends or indicators of terrorist intentions to mount attacks on infrastructure targets. The collaboration tools in the JRIES platform provide end-to-end 192 bit encryption and access is limited to partners with a counterterrorism mission.

Objectives of this expanded information exchange system include:

- Focusing more power on combating terrorism, capitalizing on thousands of capable, motivated state and municipal police
- Leveraging federal, state, local, urban, and rural anti-terrorism intelligence assets
- Performing secure, real-time collaboration and information sharing

This expanded communications network provides a means of informing our homeland security partners with current and relevant information about threats and vulnerabilities, giving them the information they need to better utilize limited resources. The country's people and critical infrastructure will be better secured by an integrated, trusted source for understandable information on vulnerabilities and appropriate security responses. Homeland Security will be better linked to our implementation partners, providing real-time information flow and situational awareness to provide for more secure hometowns across the country.

#